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## *CAUSES OF DEATH IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH*

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In 2000, the King County Medical Examiner's Office investigated 129 deaths of persons 19 years old or younger, which represented 9% (129/1,506) of the deaths investigated. Of these deaths, 29% (38/129) were of natural manner, 15% (19/129) were accidents, 12% (16/129) were homicides, 29% (38/129) were traffic related, and 9% (11/129) were suicides. There were eight deaths of children/youths classified as undetermined manner where the investigation was inconclusive as to whether the death was accidental or with intent.

Of the 38 natural deaths of children and youth investigated by the Medical Examiner, 76% (29/38) were of infants less than one year of age. Of these 29 infants who died of natural causes, 19 were due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

There were 19 children and youth whose deaths were classified as accidental, excluding traffic-related accidents. Another 38 children and youths died in traffic related accidents.

There were 16 homicides among children and youth. Of these 16 homicide victims, 8 were teenagers, 13 through 19 years of age, and 8 were children 12 and under. Thirty-eight percent (6/16) of the children and youth homicide victims died by firearms. Six (6) children six years of age and under were the victims of suspected child abuse.<sup>1</sup>

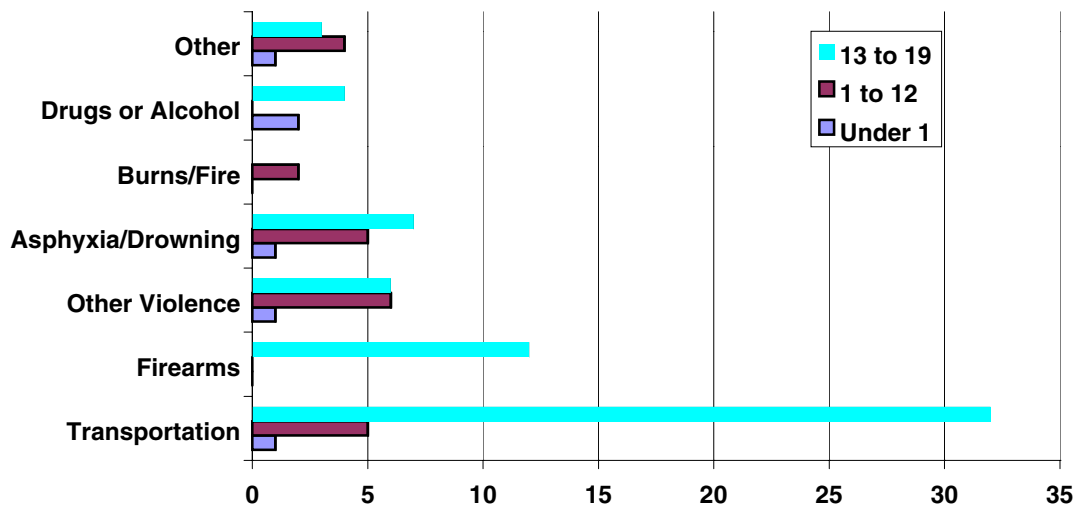
There were 9 youth suicides, between the ages of 16 and 19 years. Males comprised 100% (9/9) of the victims. Regarding the methods used to commit suicide by youth, five (5) were firearms, four (4) by hanging and two (2) by jumping from heights. There were no youth suicides from drugs in 2000.

Thirty-eight (38) children and youth 19 years and under died in traffic-related accidents, of whom 32 (84%) were teenagers. There were 11 motor vehicle driver deaths and 18 motor vehicle passenger deaths. Three (3) Youths 1 to 12 years of age and one (1) teenager died as the result of bicycle accidents. Four (4) teenagers died as pedestrians. There was no motorcycle caused teenage deaths in 2000. Of the 29 youths who died in motor vehicles, 28% (8/29) were known to be restrained and 72% (21/29) were unknown if they were using seatbelts or any other restraint device. None of the four (4) bicyclists wore helmets.

The following tables list the causes of death among children and youth for all manners in three age groups: under 1 year, 1-12 years and 13-19 years.

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<sup>1</sup> Three (3) of the child abuse cases involved incidents that occurred outside of King County.

**Graph 11-1 Non-Natural Causes of Death in Children and Youth <sup>2</sup>****Table 11-1 Causes of Death: Children Under 1 Year**

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	T	U	N		
Miscellaneous	2	1	0	1	2	19		25
Asphyxia	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Automobile Passenger	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Aspiration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Blunt Impact	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Drugs	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	
Complications of Therapy	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
SIDS	0	0	0	0	0	19	19	
Natural Disease - Others	0	0	0	0	0	10		10
Total	2	1	0	1	2	29		35

<sup>2</sup> Natural deaths excluded.

**Table 11-2 Causes of Death: Children 1 to 12 Years**

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	T	U	N		
Transportation related	0	0	0	5	0	0		5
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	
<i>Motor vehicle passenger</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Physical Trauma	3	6	0	0	0	0		9
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Fire/Burns</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Gunshot Wound</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Incised Wound</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Struck by Train</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Asphyxia	2	1	0	0	2	0		5
<i>Carbon Monoxide</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
<i>Drowning</i>	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Hanging</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
<i>Positional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Miscellaneous	2	0	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Complications of Therapy</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Fall, Ground Level</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Fire/Explosion</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Non Traffic -Vehicle</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Natural disease	1	0	0	0	0	5		6
Total	8	7	0	5	2	5		27

**Table 11-3 Causes of Death: Children 13 to 19 Years**

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	T	U	N		
Transportation related	0	0	0	32	0	0		32
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Motor vehicle driver</i>	0	0	0	11	0	0	11	
<i>Motor vehicle passenger</i>	0	0	0	16	0	0	16	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	
Physical Trauma	4	8	5	0	1	0		18
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Crushing</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Gunshot Wound</i>	0	6	5	0	1	0	12	
<i>Incised Wound/Stabbing</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Struck by Train/Object</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Drugs or alcohol exposure	4	0	0	0	0	0		4
Asphyxia	0	0	4	0	3	0		7
<i>Carbon Monoxide</i>	0	0	4	0	2	0	6	
<i>Drowning</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Miscellaneous	1	0	2	0	0	0		3
<i>Electrocution</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Jumping</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	
Natural disease	0	0	0	0	0	3		3
Total	9	8	11	32	4	3		67